JAPANESE FAIRY TALE SERIES No. 7

TONGUE CUT SPARROW.

GRIFFITH FARRAN & CO., LONDON & SYDNEY, N.S.W.

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THE

Tongue Cut Sparrow.

IT is said that once upon a time a cross old woman laid some starch in a basin intending to put it in the clothes in her

wash-tub; but a sparrow that a woman her neighbor kept as a pet eat it up. Seeing this the cross old woman seized the sparrow, and saying: "you hateful thing!" cut its tongue and let it go.

When the neighbor woman heard that her pet sparrow had got its tongue cut for its offense, she was greatly grieved, and set out with her husband over mountains and plains to find

where it had gone. Crying: "Where does the tongue-cut sparrow stay? Where does the tongue-cut sparrow stay?"

At last they found its home. When the sparrow saw that

its old master and mistress had come to see it, it rejoiced and brought them into its house and thanked them for their kindness in old times and spread a table for them, and loaded it with *sake* and fish till there was no more room, and made its wife and children and grandchildren all serve the table.

At last throwing away its drinking-cup it danced a jig

called the sparrow's dance.
Thus they spent
the day.

When it began to grow dark, and they began to talk of going home, the sparrow brought out two wicker baskets and said: "Will you

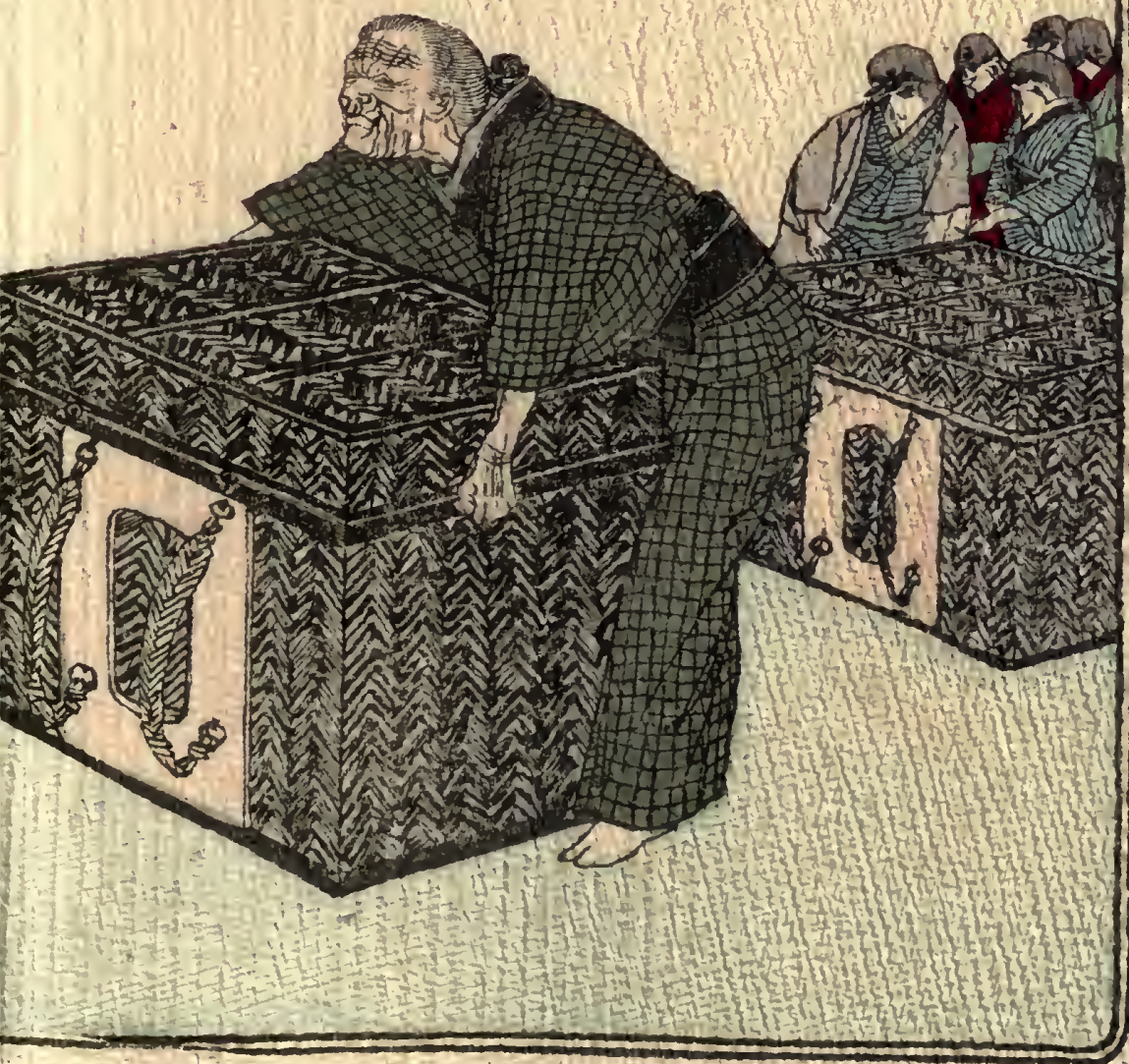
take the heavy one, or shall I give you the light one?" The old people replied: "We are old, so give us the light one; it will be easier to carry it."

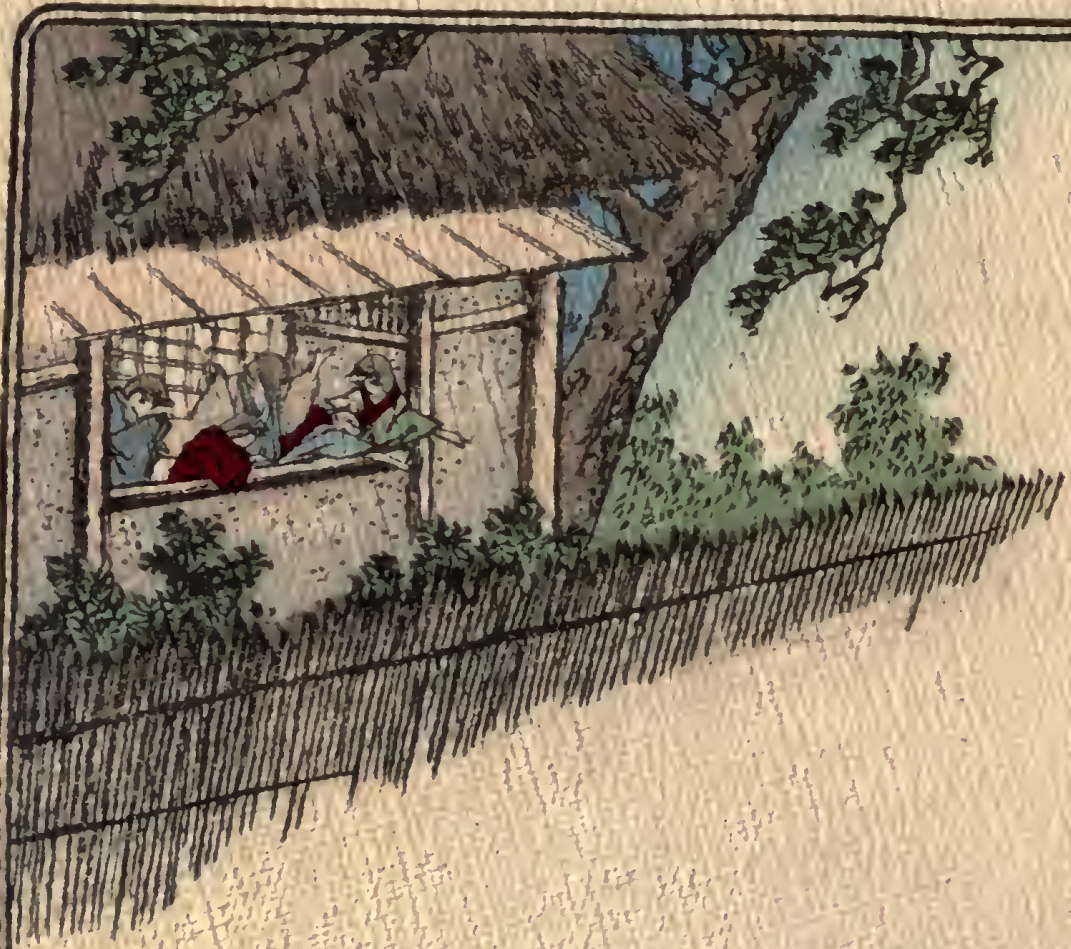
The sparrow then gave them the light basket and they returned with it to their home. "Let us open and see what is in it" they said. And when they had opened it and looked they found gold and silver and jewels and rolls of silk. They never expected any thing like this. The more they took out the more they found inside. The supply was inexhaustable. So that house at once became rich and prosperous.

When the cross old woman who had cut the sparrow's tongue saw this, she was filled with envy, and went and asked her neighbor where the sparrow lived, and all about the way. "I will go too;" she said, and at once set out on her search.

Again the sparrow brought out two wicker baskets and asked as before: "Will you take the heavy one, or shall I give you the light one?"

Thinking the treasure would be great in proportion to the weight of the basket, the old

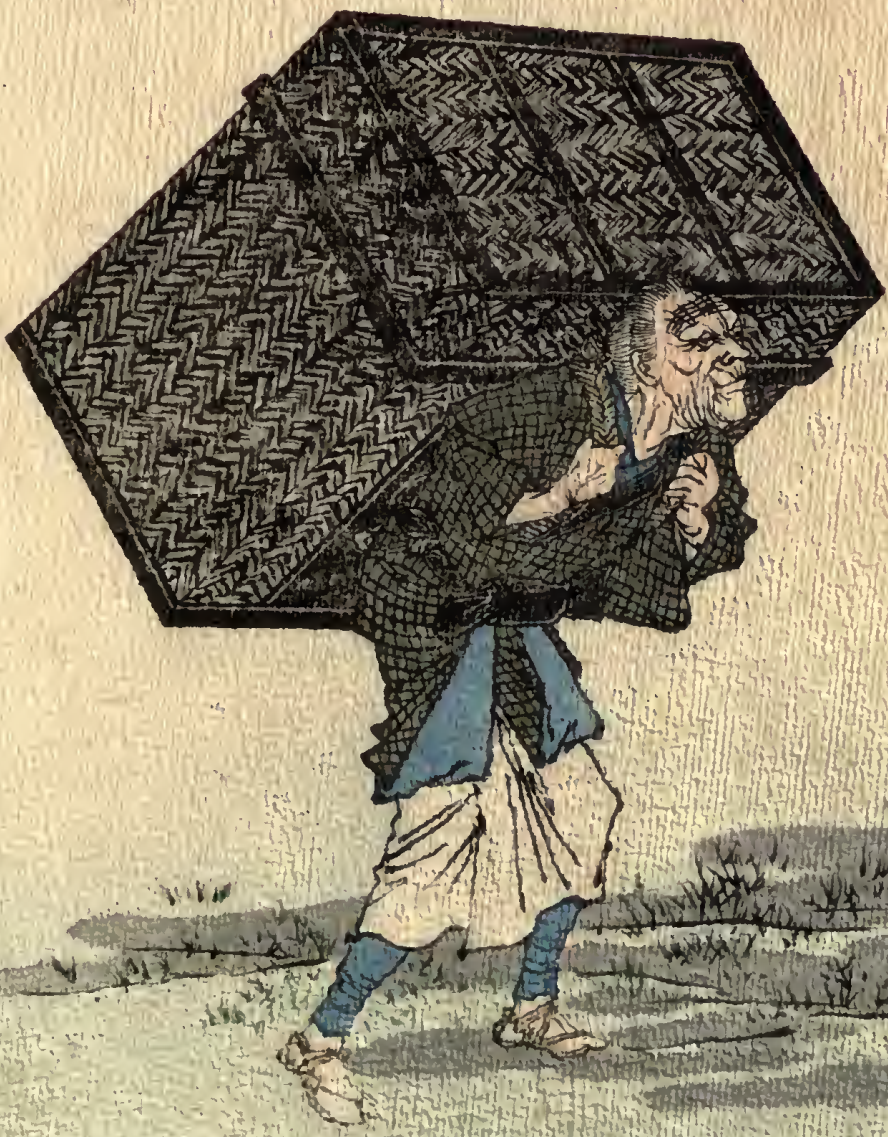




woman replied: "Let me have the heavy one."

Receiving this, she started home with it on her back; the sparrows laughing at her as she

went. It was as heavy as a stone and hard to carry; but



at last she got back with it to her house.

Then when she took off the lid and looked in a whole troop of frightful devils came bouncing out from the inside and at once tore the old woman to pieces.

Printed by the Kōbunsha in Tokyo, Japan.